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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

FRIDAY, MARCH 17, 1944.

Subject: "NO LOAFING IN THE BREADBOX." Information from home economists and food conservation specialists of U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Most women, sometime or other, say, "Of course I'd like to do more war work -- but it's so hard for me to get away from home." Well, if you've had that idea, here's a bit of war work you can do--and without stirring out of your kitchen. It's easy, too: all you have to do is post a sign on your breadbox that says, "No loafing allowed". In other words--just use up all the bread you bake or buy.

Americans still have a long way to go before we can honestly claim to be careful with food. Even though we know food is fighting the war, our garbage pails continue to swallow up tons and tons of it. One food that goes to waste all too often is bread. The War Food Administration tells us that just one slice of bread thrown into the garbage each week in every American home is the same as if our bakeries simply threw away 100 million loaves of bread a year. That's not a record to be proud of, is it?--with people starving in other parts of the world.

Why does so much bread go to waste? Part of the answer is careless buying. And then too, many homemakers complain they just can't think of ways to use stale bread. As one woman said, "All I can think of is bread pudding, and my family's so tired of that, I don't dare serve it again for months."

Well, there's really no need for an endless procession of bread puddings, because stale bread has any number of other possibilities for attractive dishes.

As long as we've already mentioned pudding, let's begin at the end of the meal, and talk first about desserts. A bread-crumb cake is a quick and easy way to glorify leftovers of bread. Just beat three eggs...add a cup of sugar...then stir in 2 cups of very dry crumbs made from oven-toasted bread. Season with one-

fourth teaspoon each of salt, cinnamon, and almond extract, and a teaspoon of vanilla. Pat the mixture into a shallow greased pan, and bake 30 minutes in a very moderate oven. This bread-crumb cake is like macaroons in texture and flavor, and you can be pretty sure the most critical family will enjoy it.

Another good disguise for stale bread is a pie made with a crumb crust. Crumb piecrust doesn't take as much fat as ordinary pastry, so it's a point-saver as well as a bread-saver.

So much for pie and cake. Now, how about puddings?—for example, a mouth-watering betty, made with rosy stalks of spring rhubarb...or any other fruit you like. And right here let me put in a kind word for that much-abused bread pudding. Of course it's tiresome, always having the same ordinary, garden-variety of bread pudding...but how about chocolate bread pudding...or lemon...orange...or spice? How about different kinds of fruit, and nuts? A little touch of imagination is all most bread pudding needs to put it back in favor with the family.

Well, so much for desserts made from leftover bread..Now for some other tricks with bread: First, sandwiches--these can be just a lunch, or something to build a whole meal around. Have you tried open-face ground beef sandwiches, broiled under direct heat and served piping hot? For another good sandwich, broil cheese on top of your bread...and sometimes put thin slices of fresh tomato, or strips of bacon, over the cheese.

A cheese toast sandwich is another good use for leftover bread. Put sharp cheese between slices of unbuttered bread, and brown the sandwich on both sides in a little fat, in a heavy frying pan. Use a low flame so the cheese will be melted by the time the bread is browned.

And now for some of the different kinds of toast you can make from leftover bread...First on the list comes French toast, because it's so adaptable—it fits into any meal of the day from morning to midnight snack...and serves either as a main dish, if you have bacon or sausage with it...or as a dessert, if you put honey, sirup, or fruit on it.

One favorite that's overlooked all too often is cinnamon toast. And for a snack, or a pick-me-up, don't forget steaming hot milk toast. Of course toasted stale bread makes an excellent base for a welsh rabbit, or for any kind of creamed dish--vegetables, eggs, chipped beef, poultry, or fish.

Crisp oven toast adds a nice touch to meals when you serve it in place of bread. To make oven toast, just put stale bread in the oven when it's cooling off after you've been baking. Sometimes try cutting the bread into strips, for bread sticks--or cube it and make croutons to serve in soup. Store oven toast in a tightly-covered tin box.

Use broken pieces of oven toast for crumbs--you can grind them in the food chopper. For soft crumbs, put untoasted bread through a fine collander. You know crumbs have endless uses in cooking--cake, piecrust, and puddings, as I mentioned earlier...scalloped dishes...breading foods for frying...topping casserole dishes...extending dishes made of ground meat...and of course you'll want to make bread crumb stuffings for poultry, meat, and vegetables. Store crumbs in a jar covered with cheesecloth or a perforated metal lid.

Well, these are just some of the ways leftover bread can add interest to meals and subtract from food waste. So keep the "no loafing" sign posted on your breadbox. Put those loafing loaves to work--to help yourself and the nation.

